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Center of Vision

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The Center of Vision is made and gotten out by the students of the Massachusetts Normal Art School as a prayer - partly for help, partly for thanksgiving.

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THE WASHERWOMAN . . Millet

Courtesy of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

Cyrus Edwin Dallin

In turning the pages of the life-book of Cyrus E. Dallin, the "dramatically inclined" will find pictures that are far from "disappointing." First you see the small boy in a rough mountain cabin in Utah shooting arrows of his own construction over a high adobe wall which is his protection against the undue familiarity of the Red Man. Again you may see him following the "Buffalo Bill" troupe over Europe, studying the ways of the enemies of his boyhood. Then, too, the sight of the distinguished looking man sitting beside Vice President Sherman in a barouche, bowing in gracious acknowledgment of the admiration of the people assembled at the unveiling of one of the most imposing and elaborate works of sculpture of modern times, that sight would easily give rise to a note of importance in your voice when you say, "Oh yes! I've studied with him."

It was when a youth of eighteen that Mr. Dallin went to work in one of his father's mines in order to earn enough money to go to an academy in a town nearby. One day a bed of soft white clay was discovered out of which were modelled two life-size heads. These caused no little admiration among the miners, and they say the artist was talked of as far away as Silver City, three miles distant. The two heads were sent to a fair there and as a result two wealthy miners were so convinced of the ability of the boy sculptor that they sent him to the studio of Freeman H. Bartlett in Boston, where the artistic education of a great man was begun.

If we dwell long on his art studies at Ecole des Beaux Arts and at Julien Academy in Paris, or on his early teaching career in Philadelphia at the Drexel Institute, or on his work in

the atelier of Jean Dampt on his second visit to Paris, we lose sight of the valuable lessons for us in the man's career. For instance, how many professional men at thirty-five are modest and brave enough to turn their backs on a brilliant career just opening, for the purpose of disciplining their capacities and polishing their talent on the educational grindstone? His is the spirit which says, "I am discontented with all that I have accomplished yet, and all that I am as yet, but because I am discontent, I will press on to something higher and better." He left his position as teacher at the Drexel Institute to return to the severe, monotonous drill of the classroom.

In his art Mr. Dallin has utilized his early familiarity with the aborigines in preserving for us the most striking and intimate traits of the redskins. He gives the suggestion of something larger than we know, by omitting the prose of nature and giving the spirit and splendor. The ability to do this is shown to good advantage in "The Signal of Peace" and "The Medicine Man," two of the most notable and significant products of American sculpture.

It is saying a great deal of one man when you tell of his gold medals received at such places as the Chicago, Paris, St. Louis and Buffalo expositions, a gold medal at the salon in 1909 and finally the first prize competition for the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument recently unveiled at Syracuse; but in spite of all that, there is the same deep interest in work, the same inspiring enthusiasm, the same student spirit that has always been a characteristic attribute.

If you were to hear Mr. Dallin say something like this to you: "As a student, fill your mind with impressions in early life,-look for dignity, simplicity, broadness; as a teacher try to supply

an atmosphere in which thought can take root and grow and impulse may be aroused. Study what you have done to know its weakness; then formulate your ideal and hold fast to it till it does its work. Find out the thing in nature which gives you the most exquisite sensation; that which you do most happily; that which gives you the holiest thrill; - work it out and develop it." If you were to hear that, wouldn't you hasten to write it down in your book of rules on the page marked, "Things Worth While?"

ART NEWS

After being assured with many upliftings of eyebrows and clasping of hands that it was "simply divine" we hied ourselves to the Copley to view the portrait of "one Ernest L. Major."

Of course it's a Yankee trait to slam anything much praised, but we were honestly disappointed. It's a good likeness, splendid composition, and a fine conception; the combination of Cotie and the same being particularly happy; but there is a something lacking, we don't know just what, perhaps "enbonpoint,"but at any rate, we feel that Mr. Baker has not gotten the "character." It is not Mr. Major as M. N. A. S. knows him.

And we feel the same about the other portraits. The real interesting, vital characteristic of each person has been either overlooked or else submerged. Mr. Major's was far the best of the portraits.

We greatly regret that we weren't able to go to the Murphy - Closson show at Vose's, but as for getting any information about it - Gracious! no - not gracious! We asked a sophomore girl about it, and she said it was grand, "GRAND, only you couldn't tell which were Murphy's and which were Closson's!

We liked the Margaret Richardson things - we say it a bit defiantly - but we liked them. We know the color was not "restrained" and also that they were a bit "bizarre," but we know something else - it's a secret, but being feminine we have the privilege of telling it and it's this - All those funny little shreiking vases and youth-seeking blue draperies mean something. Each picture is a drawing of character, a noble sort of caricature, and each distressing detail which has so puzzled the heads of most of us points to some foible of the model's. At any rate - and we say this a bit vindictively - *the shadows are human.*

At Vose's there are some paintings by Gifford Beals. Sargent says that in one of them there is more paint than he has used all the year - what about results? They were great tho' with wonderful light and shade and an atmosphere (pardon) that you really could breathe! They were painted thickly but with a surety that made them delightful.

And then there was the Cushing show. We walked around it with a bored expression-at least we hope it was bored-we really felt sort of uneasy-until we faced that veranda and the little, straight-armed, curly-headed boy talking to his beautiful mother silhouetted against the boy - then we waxed appreciative. We like them, yes, we do. We like that "touchy" sort of technique, the queer artistic interiors, and the beautiful table which it is evident the artist himself is fond of - you cannot talk about reflected light and the dividing line of light and shade, you just like them, that's all.

Secure in the posession of a museum-ticket we felt quite condescending toward the other poor mortals who were toiling up the stairs to see Frick's exhibition, but when we actually forced our way through the mob and out we felt very small and very young, and very, very ignorant. Many of the things we have seen in prints, but there is a feeling of awe which comes over one when in the presence of real master-work.

It really is impossible to write fluently about them, praise at best is halting, - but we commend to your special notice the lady with the bracelets, by Lawrence, the Van Dykes, particularly the Franz Hals, and that wonderful Raeburn of Mrs.Cruikshanks and the Vermeer!

And now is the blest time of the year when everyone forgets his particular grouch and celebrates merry, merry Christmas. We hope that the proverbial neckties will be all suitable shades, and that recipients of articles from the ruffles counter will be duly grateful. But do not forget the "other fellow." We hope you will have the best Christmas ever, and "come back from vacation refreshed and ready to work."

Gladys L. Forbush

THE ADIRON'S TALE

From the great back-log little tongues of flame shot upward, and the sparks fluttered spirally as they danced up on their chimneyward journey. It was just at that hour of dusk when the shadows send the brave little high-lights chasing about for a foothold in the immediate circle of firelight. The twin andirons were wont to wax eloquent upon such cosy evenings, and I, curled up before the fire, was hoping that they would begin.

As I leaned forward to prod the logs into a more animated action, the twin andirons nodded to each other and settled more firmly upon their chubby feet. Knowing that sign, I preserved a reposeful indifference. Of old I knew their skill as reconteurs; knew that a story was coming; knew, too, that any interruption would be fatal. Time and time again had a word of encouragement, a too eager attitude of attention, led the twins to a sudden change of subject.

Fat little Tweedledum whipped his handkerchief from his coat-tails pocket, patted his shining, bald pate, bowed ceremoniously to his audience of one, and thus he began:

"Far away in the Orient, centuries and centuries ago, lived one called the Prince of Egypt. Now the Prince was a man of deep thought, and passing high ideals. One of the beacon-lights of his mind was the image of a beautiful maiden named Truth, and his one ambition was to embody Truth for all the world. Year in, year out, Egypt toiled up 'ambition's ladder,' growing old and gray and wrinkled. Now it would seem that he was nearing his goal, that Truth was nearly ready; and again he thought that he never could give form to his elusive ideal. At last, however, his thought and chiseling were rewarded. His

self-imposed task was ended. Egypt's truth took the form of stone temples, massive and grand in their simplicity."

Tweedledum's pause gave me time to poke up the fire once more. Then Tweedledee, rotund, dignified, and elderly, took up his thread of the story..

"The great stone the Prince of Egypt started rolling has never been allowed to pause. On and on it has gone down the age. All people and all princes possess the same ambition, and each individual must interpret it in the way which seems best to him.

Now there is the great Prince of the Present. He is toiling away in his mighty craft-shop to give form to Truth. Often it seems that he has attained his goal, and yet there is always the spur of unsatisfied desires to goad him on to greater achievements. He is digging deep foundations for cities to rise upon; chopping and hewing stone; bridging over the stupendous gulfs of whirling waters; toiling in the mines of knowledge; laying rails across the desert plain; flying, and sending messages through the trackless air; working unceasingly to demolish the barriers to Truth. The Prince of the Present also possesses that great gift of beauty, ages old, which is teaching him how to shape his thought and action to the fulfillment of his desire in the guiding of his brush or chisel.

The world is fain to hope that out of the Kingdom of the Present will come those who may give to lifeless marble, to to the blank expanse of a canvas, to the page of a music-score, or perhaps to the sterner duties of life, the expression of the beautiful maiden, Truth."

The back-log hissed and sputtered and snapped as it sent up its cheery sparks. The little orators yawned and nodded

across the hearthrug. I withdrew from the armchair before the fire and retired from the presence of the twin andirons feeling much as the little mouse must have felt when he said,

"I am a little meadow mouse,
And live within a burrowed house;
But I can look up through the door
And view the sky, and sometimes more."

ENTRE-NOUS

Merry Christmas ! Wonderful, perfectly wonderful is the mollient influence of Christmas. The spirit of generosity and geniality has descended upon us as a plague, nowhere can we escape its influence. The essence of good-will is effervescent everywhere. With reckless abandon we scatter our worldly goods beseeching our borrowing neighbor to "take mine, I implore you, take mine." The Lord High Executioner may, figuratively, slash and trample, and verbally rend to atoms your technique, your value, and your self-conceit, but you bear him no malice - 'tis for your own good. Even the "facultyesque" stolidity which quenches and chills during the rest of the year now smiles and tolerates our naughtiness. Now is the time to drag forth in their unblushing threadbareness the proverbial remarks about resolutions; and to brush the dust of time from the well-worn book of which there is ever a new leaf to be turned at this season. But, 'tis my advice if last year's resolves are, having never been used, as

good as new, why not use them ? Perchance there may be amongst them the one: "Resolved, to work hard during the year and accomplish that which will have made the year worth living." If so, why add others ? 'Twould be but the more confusing.

I hope everyone is toiling and hoarding and saving, bearing in mind the exhibition. Perhaps it were possible to show those inferior museum beings 'Who's who in Boston,' and why. Let all the embryonic Reubens, Corots, Whistlers, and so forth, bundle together their attempts, and make it the best, biggest, and busiest yet. Remember that though the first attempt may not be a masterpiece it is all your own conscientious labor, and be proud of your own work though you may be prouder of your neighbor's.

The masculine element will degenerate the moment it is removed from feminine influence; Witness, - the boys' studio and the pageant therein enacted. The costumes were alarmingly original, nay - aboriginal.

Stewart, after the usual dissertation; "Time and time again have I come in here and said nothing."

The Portuguese navy was reported lost many days ago, and the "Major" part of the world were at a loss to account for the sudden disappearance; the latest reports, however, tend to show that in an unguarded moment Sweden or Ethiopia had, by means of superior forces overwhelmed and confiscated it.

Do you believe in blue paint as a key to the moral character ?

The freshmen announce that they enjoyed the treat in the wine-room of the Hayward very much; to avoid ambiguity I wish to announce that they referred to the mural decorations.

It is most encouraging to note that some of the Juniors who were absolutely impervious to geometry, and received scarcely a taint of perspective, are responding manfully (I use that word "manfully" advisedly) to the anatomy lectures.

The sophomores confess that nothing ever happens in their class worth editing - poor sophs - they must learn to live rather than vice versa.

I wish that the owner of that Shakesperian, Hamletesque pen-knife would claim it. It is distressing to one of nervous temperament to be confronted by that murderous poster every morning.

Now that winter has settled upon us Stevy is longing for Waverley, perhaps because it is still 'Nice' and 'Green' there.

In addition to their other studies the girls of Mr. Hamilton's studio are interested in scientific agriculture; they confess, though, that however enjoyable raising plums by geometry may be they prefer picking cherries in the good old-fashioned way.

The sophomores believe in home-rule and are suspicious of disinterested intruders. What is it about "Graft springs eternal in the human breast."

The Juniors have had all sorts of opportunities for displaying their ability in various directions. Wait until you see their histrionic attempts.

Poor Sam Brown Giastricus ! 'Mid expressions of sympathy and magnificent floral tributes, Sam was laid in what we hope is his final resting-place. May he R.I.P. His youth and beauty make his sudden demise all the more tragic. "Let the heroine born of woman crush the serpent with his heel." A good many of us have been crushed time and time again but a as, fo Sam 'twas fatal. After the accident Mr. Johnston immediately applied Rule Fourteen from the First Aid Chart, but it proved ineffective. Giastricus never regained consciousness and was unable to speak to the grief-stricken relations who attended his death-bed.

The bereaved wish to acknowledge the expressions of sympathy and condolence from dear friends.

B. Shirley Badger

Who's Who Among The Freshmen.

One of the most modest of the fellows in the Freshman class has won fourteen medals, three cups, a dress-suit case, and an alarm clock, through his proficiency in athletics. Jumping is one of his especially strong points. This chap's name is "Charlie" Brown.

Everett N. Johnston had the honor of being the major of the high school battalion in Amesbury last year. He is also a distance runner.

Margaret Pratt, otherwise known as "Peggy," only last year shone as valedictorian for her class, and also wrote the class ode. Two of her stories have been accepted by a Sunday School paper. She is an excellent basket ball player and has had prominent part in amateur theatricals.

Pearl Hayden, of Quincy, who went to a "girls' school" before coming here, i. e., Woodward Institute, was also a crack basket ball player. Without allowing her studies to interfere with her school life she excelled in mathematics, French and German.

Miriam Chase's ability as a writer of humorous bits has been favorably commented upon on several occasions. She has also been successful with compositions of the more serious sort. Miss Chase wrote the class ode and class prophecy at Woodward Institute last year. She also won the Five-dollar prize offered by the Alumni for the best theme.

NOTE. There are others, of whom we will write later.

TREMENDOUS TRIFLES

Up to last week Christmas meant to me only a harrowing consciousness that I never can obtain sufficient wherewithal to procure presents for the people I wanted to give them to. I worried about it and saved and scrimped, and heartily wished the institution abolished forever. But -- last week I went to the country and saw all manner of nice things. I saw the frozen river with pools of black water in the ice, and I heard the ice creak and groan and roar all night long. The wind had a chance to really blow as hard as it liked, and it took full advantage of the opportunity and howled about the house in the proper ghostly manner. Early in the morning I opened the kitchen door and there stood the fluffy kitten with its fur all blown the wrong way in a tremendous hurry to get indoors. It purred all day behind the kitchen stove, which space it shared companionably with the collie. Eleven little new pigs "all pink" burrowed under the straw in the barn cellar, and cows steamed as they munched their hay. The horses had all grown long furry coats since I saw them last. Everything was so glorious and cold outdoors and so warm and comfy inside. They fried a "fresh batch" of doughnuts while I was there, and I helped make pounds and pounds of butter. I lived on baked apples and cream and a very superior sort of molasses cooky. I cannot begin to tell you how perfectly great it was, but I came back quite shaken up and done over, and with a substantial supply of peace-on-earth-good will-toward-men feeling that I think will last me quite a while if nothing untoward happens. I have expended my entire capital for two exceptional dolls which I shall dress strangely and won-

derfully for the edification of two five-year-olds, and everyone else may go hang ! (I trust this expression escapes the eagle eye of the faculty). The very best Christmas wish I can give you is that you will spend your vacation, every bit of it, on a real, live farm, and that you may have the fun of decorating a tree or filling a stocking for some blessed kid that still believes in Santa.

I have tried very hard this month to write a bitter and sarcastic article on the way "this school is run," but it has fallen completely through by reason of a secret inner conviction that whatever is wrong we are perfectly capable of righting for ourselves. Our rules are few and simple, perhaps too few, and while it is distressingly easy to break them and "get away with it," still it must be admitted that our wickednesses are committed with our eyes open and full knowledge of the result to ourselves of our misdemeanors. My experience with human nature from the ages of sixteen up to twenty-four, or so, compels me to admit that a sterner discipline would only lead us to employ our intellect in escaping it as frequently as possible, and as we need the aforesaid intellect for the times when we occasionally work, it is well that we have as few rules as possible to overcome. It may be that the system of discipline is founded on the famous saying of our favorite (obviously !) instructor that "the worse they are the better they can paint." This, however, we feel, is entirely too radical for New England, and would be a little more than the reputation of any school could stand. It seems more likely that they are trying the cruellest system of all to live up to, and that they are putting us on our honor. To be specific, it is no

one's loss but our own if we choose to be an hour late to school four mornings in the week for four years - to spend our time in brilliant conversation when we arrive - and finally to "sneak" at twelve. The faculty, apparently, will never know it. At least it will not concern itself strenuously, and we will emerge from the school, and our friends will tell us "how lovely it must be to be able to draw and paint" but we will never have found out. In a book which I own entitled "Advice to Lady Authors" it states that it is well for young aspirants to quote frequently. This by way of apology for dragging in Edwin Markham by the heels. In his poem on Lincoln he says,

> He built the rail-pile as he built the state,
> Pouring his splendid strength through every stroke,
> The conscience of him testing every blow
> To make his deed the measure of a man."

If we don't really care to *paint*, a little conscious attention to our characters wouldn't hurt us any. Consciences are useful, and if we only knew every day marks our measure, and it isn't often we come up to the standard.

Frances Downes

Characters; Four shepherds, one a mere lad.
Scene; A hilltop. Midnight.

The three older shepherds are grouped together, whispering, now and then glancing upwards eagerly; the lad apart, busy, binding with splints and torn strips from his coat, the broken leg of a lamb.

First Shepherd (rising and pointing eagerly) There !

Second Shepherd - Softly, brother. 'Twas there last night. We wait a greater sign.

(The sheep in the midst of the fold begin to stir uneasily and seem about to bolt. The Boy, rising, moves among them, speaking to them with low, clear notes of warning.)

Third Shepherd - The very sheep sense it. The air is vibrant.

(The boy still moves amongst the sheep, watching the other shepherds keenly, and with troubled looks.)

Three Shepherds (in unison) Ah !

(They rise and stand apart, gazing upward, their faces illumined by a strange light. On the edge of the flock a ram starts and stands stiff-legged, stirring the rest. The boy quiets them skillfully.)

Three Shepherds - It moves ! (They follow slowly, still looking upwards, seeming to be drawn by some great power, their lips moving in prayer.)

(A great commotion amongst the sheep. They run to and fro excitedly. The Boy calls to the shepherds, but they move on unheeding. The sheep grow wilder.)

(The Boy runs swiftly toward them and throws himself in their path.) Would ye leave the sheep?

First Shepherd - The sheep. Mind not the sheep.

Second Shepherd - It moves again. Let's on.

Third Shepherd (pointing) Boy, what see you there ?

Boy - 'Tis a star. The sheep ---

First Shepherd - Aye, but this star is different.

Boy - They are all different. The sheep are uneasy.

First Shepherd - But yonder star is a miracle. It is God's work.

Boy - So are the sheep.
First Shepherd - Have ye, then, no faith ?

Boy - Aye, and need it not sanctioned by miracles. The sheep are afraid.

Third Shepherd - Why bother with the boy ? He does not understand. Let's on.

The Boy (Barring the way.) Ye say I do not understand. Speak ye of miracles ? Out there are a thousand sheep, yours and mine to tend. Each day ye come to watch them but ye see them not. A thousand miracles and ye see them not. But let a single ewe cast a lamb with five legs and ye stand over it in wonder. Last eve when the sun sank behind yonder hilltop ye

sat there unheeding, gambling with your marked pebbles. Ye heed not the fire, but let an accidental spark fly from the forge and you chase it with awe. I know not whether yonder star has special meaning but I do know the others have. If your faith have need of yonder star - go then. I stay with the sheep. [He stands aside and they pass him, unheeding, their faces turned towards the heaven and pass out of sight down the hillside. The boy goes back to the sheep, runs this way and that, quieting them; stands a moment looking up into the night and then goes back to the wounded sheep.]

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